

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 13, 2013

The Honorable Dan Ashe
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Ashe,

We write in strong support of the proposed rule to delist the gray wolf nationally, included in docket number FWS-HQ-ES-2013-0073, although we are opposed to the provision included in this rule that would list the Mexican wolf as an endangered sub-species.

The statutory purpose of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is to recover species to the point where they are no longer considered “endangered” or “threatened.” The gray wolf is currently found in 46 countries around the world and has been placed in the classification of “least concern” globally for risk of extinction by the International Union for Conservation Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission Wolf Specialist Group. This is a clear indication that this species is not endangered or threatened with extinction.

In spite of years of lawsuits from environmental activists, robust populations in the United States and Canada have already led to the delisting of from the ESA in the Northern Rocky Mountain and Western Great Lakes region. Your proposed rule correctly acknowledges that the 1978 listing of the gray wolf erroneously included the Eastern United States as the historical habitat of this species.

The proposed rule also notes that there is no distinctive genetic or behavioral difference between the wolves in Canada and the Western delisted regions in the United States, and the gray wolves that currently reside where the species is still classified as endangered. There are also no geographic barriers to prevent the wolves from traveling between areas where the species is currently delisted and where they are not. In fact, packs identified in the Pacific Northwest where the gray wolf is still listed as endangered have been found to be descendants of those in British Columbia and the delisted Northern Rocky Mountain region – and therefore are not a “discrete” population as defined under ESA.

We agree with the assertion in the proposed rule that ESA “does not require us to restore the gray wolf (or any other species) to all of its historical range or even to a majority of its current suitable habitat. Instead, the Act requires that we recover listed species such that they no longer meet the definitions of ‘threatened species’ or ‘endangered species’...although *C. lupus* (gray wolf) has undergone significant range contraction in portions of its historical range, the species continues to be widespread and, as a whole, stable. We have found no substantial evidence to suggest that gray wolves

are at risk of extinction throughout their global range nor or are likely to become so in the foreseeable future.”

Federal policies must be based on the best available science. In addition to scientific data showing significant increases to the number of wolves nationally, the proposed rule also recognizes a number of significant changes in scientists’ understanding of the taxonomy and historic habitat in the 35 years since the gray wolf was first listed as endangered.

The full delisting of the gray wolf is long overdue. Since wolves were first provided protections under the ESA, uncontrolled and unmanaged growth of wolf populations has resulted in devastating impacts on hunting and ranching and tragic damages to historically strong and healthy herds of moose, elk, big horn sheep and mule deer. This is why we believe it is critical that you reconsider your decision to list the Mexican wolf as a sub-species under ESA, which would have a severe impact on private landowners, including ranchers, in Arizona, New Mexico, and surrounding states.

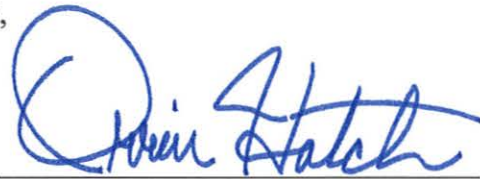
We believe that state governments are fully qualified to responsibly manage wolf populations and are better able to meet the needs of local communities and wildlife populations. Delisting the gray wolf under ESA would allow state wildlife officials to more effectively manage wolf populations, just as Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan have proven is possible.

We urge that you move forward with finalizing and implementing the proposed rule to nationally delist the gray wolf – while reconsidering your proposal to list the Mexican wolf as a sub-species under ESA – without further delay.

Sincerely,



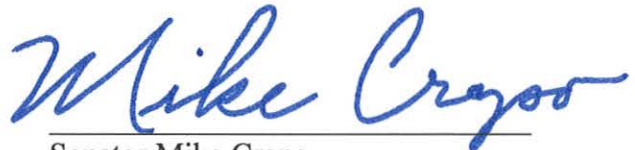
Representative Doc Hastings



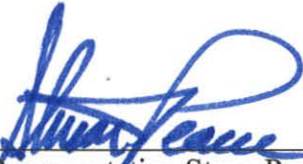
Senator Orrin Hatch



Representative Cynthia Dummis



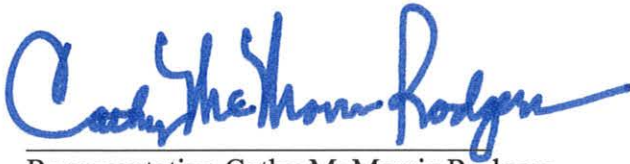
Senator Mike Crapo



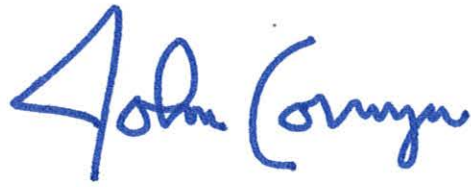
Representative Steve Pearce



Senator Mike Lee



Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers



Senator John Cornyn



Representative Doug LaMalfa



Senator Mike Enzi



Representative Steve Southerland



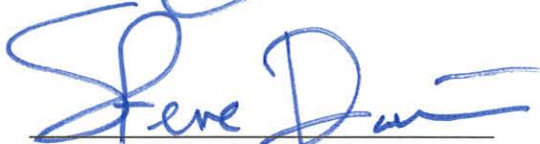
Senator James Risch



Representative Reid Ribble



Senator John Barrasso



Representative Steve Daines



Senator David Vitter



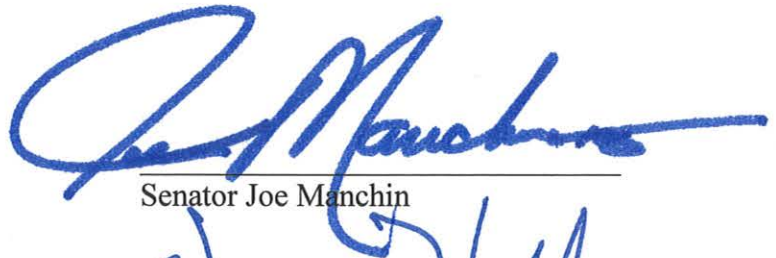
Representative Dan Benishek



Senator Heidi Heitkamp



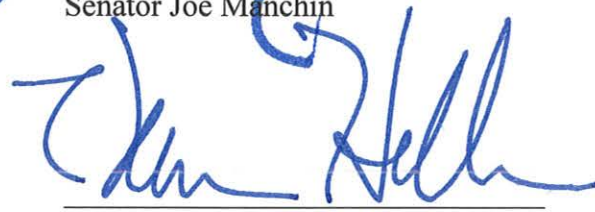
Representative Kevin Cramer



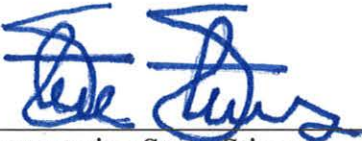
Senator Joe Manchin



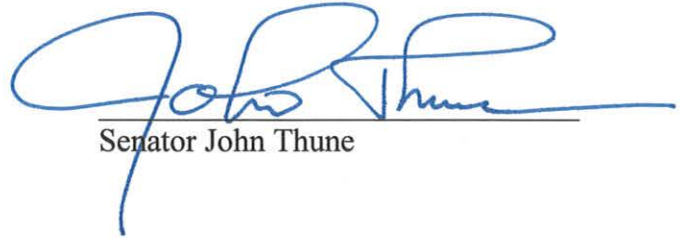
Representative Paul Ryan



Senator Dean Heller



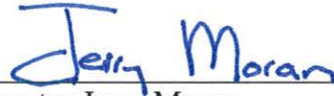
Representative Steve Stivers



Senator John Thune



Representative Jim Matheson



Senator Jerry Moran



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Senator James Inhofe



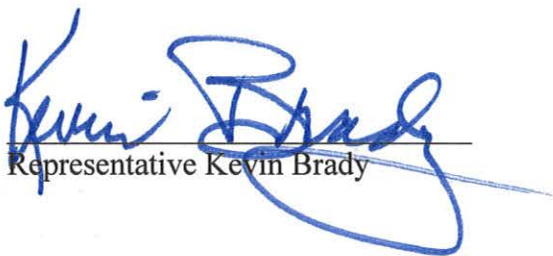
Representative Bill Huizenga



Senator Lisa Murkowski



Representative Chris Stewart



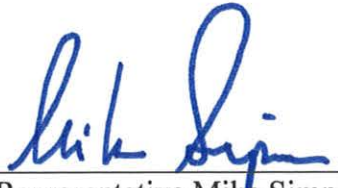
Representative Kevin Brady



Representative Rob Bishop



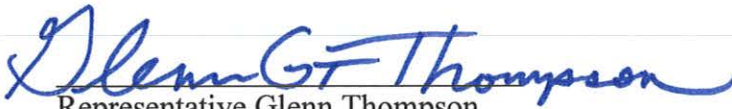
Representative John Fleming



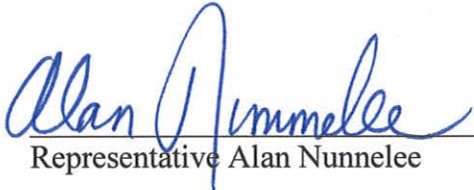
Representative Mike Simpson



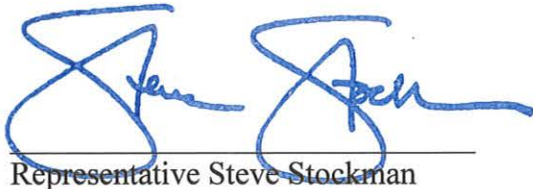
Representative Don Young



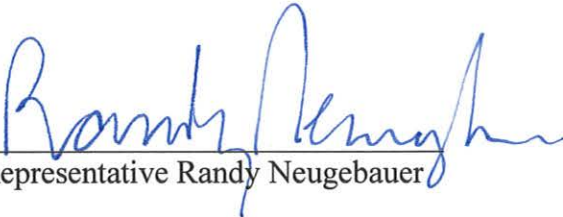
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Representative Alan Nunnelee



Representative Steve Stockman



Representative Randy Neugebauer



Representative Bill Johnson



Representative Pete Sessions


Representative Mike Conaway


Representative Greg Walden


Representative Michele Bachmann

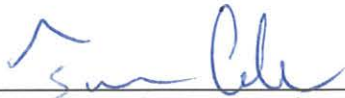

Representative Tom McClintock


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Representative Adrian Smith


Representative Kenny Marchant

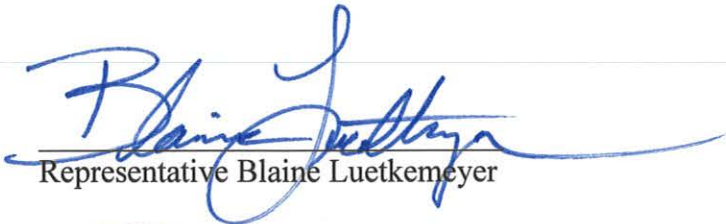

Representative Rob Wittman



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Representative Kristi Noem



Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer



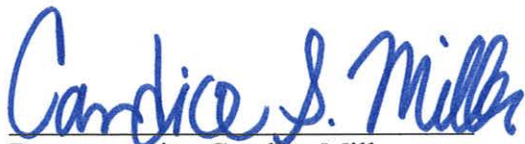
Representative David Schweikert



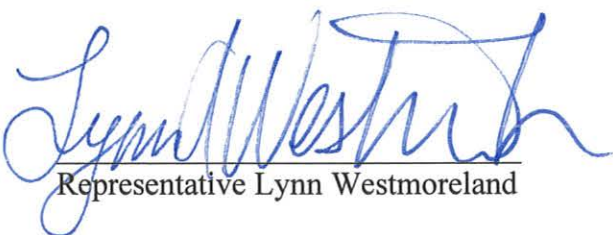
Representative John Kline



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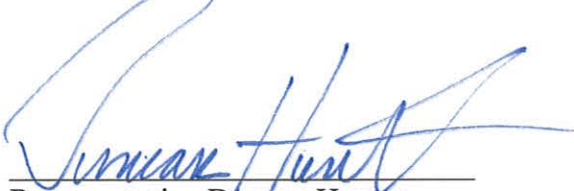
Representative Candice Miller



Representative Lynn Westmoreland



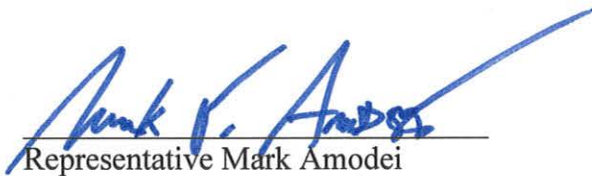
Representative Bill Flores



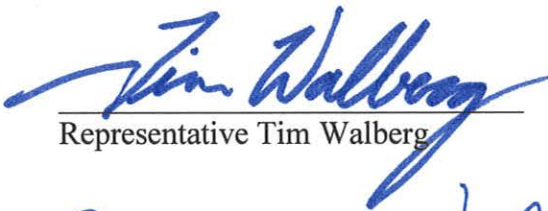
Representative Duncan Hunter



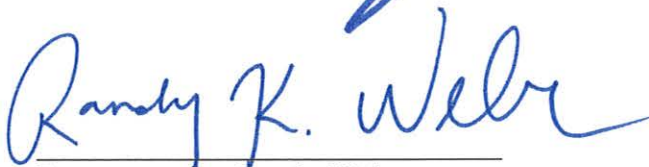
Representative Mike Pompeo



Representative Mark Amodei



Representative Tim Walberg



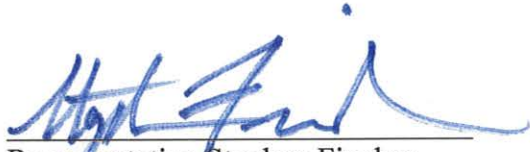
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Representative Matt Salmon



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Representative Stephen Fincher


Representative Mick Mulvaney



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Representative Dennis Ross


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